

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8535

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 5360

LIMDIS

EA ONLY

FOR ASST. SECY, HOLBROOKE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, UNGA, MY
SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT

REF: (A) STATE 185263; (B) KUALA LUMPUR 2498; (C) STATE 085804;
(D) KUALA LUMPUR 2209; (E) KUALA LUMPUR 1762

1. MFA PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR EUROPE AND AMERICAS
M.M. SATHIAH TELEPHONED POL SECTION CHIEF YESTERDAY (AUG 11)
RE DATUK HUSSEIN'S MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT. HE SAID THAT
HIS GOVERNMENT FRANKLY HOPED THE VISIT WOULD BE BILLED AS
AN "OFFICIAL VISIT". HE INDICATED THAT THEIR CONCERN IN
PART REFLECTED VIEWS EXPRESSED BY MALAYSIAN AMBASSADOR ZAIN
AZRAII IN HIS REPORTING FROM WASHINGTON ON THIS SUBJECT.

2. SATHIAH REITERATED SOME OF THE SAME POINTS AMBASSADOR
ZAIN MADE TO THEN ACTING ASST. SECY. GLEYSTEN APRIL 15 WHEN
HE MADE THE FORMAL REQUEST FOR AN
OFFICIAL VISIT TO WASHINGTON FOR THE PRIME MINISTER (REF C).
HE NOTED THAT THE LAST "OFFICIAL VISIT" BY A MALAYSIAN
PRIME MINISTER HAD BEEN MADE BY FORMER PM TUNKU ABDUL
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RAHMAN BACK IN 1964. THE LAST MALAYSIAN PM TO VISIT
WASHINGTON AND MEET THE THE PRESIDENT WAS LATE PRIME
MINISTER RAZAK IN 1971, BUT HIS MEETING HAD ONLY BEEN A
"FUNCTIONAL" ONE. THE PRIME MINISTER'S OVERRIDING
INTEREST IN VISITING THE U.S. WAS TO MEET WITH THE
PRESIDENT AND USG OFFICIALS; HE WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT
BE MAKING THE TRIP IF IT WERE ONLY TO ATTEND THE UNGA,

SATHIAH EMPHASIZED.

3. SATHIAH SAID THAT HE HOPED WE WERE AWARE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S "SPECIAL INTEREST IN DEVELOPING TIES WITH THE U.S." THIS HAD BEEN REFLECTED IN THE RECEPTION ACCORDED FORMER VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER WHEN HE VISITED MALAYSIA IN MARCH, 1976, AND IN THE PM'S ACCESSIBILITY FOR PRIVATE CHATS WITH THE U.S. AMBASSADOR. NOT ONLY DOES THE GOM SEE THIS AS BEING VERY IMPORTANT IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, BUT THEY ALSO SEE THE VISIT AS BEING OF SIGNIFICANCE IN THE ASEAN CONTEXT. THE PRIME MINISTER WILL BE VISITING THE U.S. SHORTLY AFTER PLAYING HOST TO THE ASEAN SUMMIT, AND THUS AS THE FIRST ASEAN LEADER TO VISIT THE U.S. AFTER THE SUMMIT HE WILL BE IN A POSITION "TO SAY THINGS ON BEHALF OF ASEAN," SATHIAH ADDED. HIS GOVERNMENT HOPED THAT THE HUSSEIN'S VISIT AS AN "OFFICIAL" ONE. "WE ARE NOT CONCERNED ABOUT HAVING A LOT OF TRIMMINGS," BUT RATHER ARE DISAPPOINTED THAT IT IS NOT BEING TREATED AS AN "OFFICIAL" VISIT, SATHIAH REMARKED.

4. COMMENT: I HOPE THAT WASHINGTON WILL GIVE VERY CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THIS REACTION BY THE GOM. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT NOW THAT THE ASEAN SUMMIT AND RELATED MEETINGS ARE OVER THE GOM IS BEGINNING TO FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE U.S., AND THE VISIT IS BEGINNING TO ASSUME GREATER IMPORTANCE IN THEIR EYES. SINCE WE
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ARE LIKELY TO GET INTO PLANNING DISCUSSIONS VERY SOON WITH THE GOM, I WOULD APPRECIATE EARLY GUIDANCE. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT WHAT THE MALAYSIANS ARE PRIMARILY CONCERNED ABOUT IS HOW THE VISIT IS PACKAGED. I THEREFORE HOPE SOME FORMULA CAN BE DEVISED TO SATISFY BOTH THEIR DESIDERATA AS WELL AS OURS.
MILLER

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